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THE LESSONS OF A FAILURE

One of the preparatory papers for the Willingen Conference of the IMC in July 1952 is entitled China and the World Mission of the Church: The Lessons of a Failure, by the Rev. Charles C. West, formerly of Nanking (Pres. USA Mission). This is a very penetrating study, though the basic presumption, that the fact that missionaries have been driven out of China and much of their work discontinued is a proof that they have failed is a questionable one. It is however certain that there have been elements of weakness in the missions program of the past, and West puts his finger on several of these.

1. We can no longer think in terms of cultural units, some Christian and some non-Christian, in our evangelism. While we were trying to adapt the Christian message to China's ancient culture, a basically alien ideology captured the country. "The issue in China and other mission lands today is not between old cultures and western influences. The issue is rather the search for answers to problems of human need - for peace, livelihood, meaning and direction in life. The Christian Mission is challenged in these situations, not to be more culturally adaptive, but to be more prophetic, more creative, free alike from the stereotypes of the East and the West. A Christian answer to human need in the slums of London may be of more practical help to the missionary in Calcutta than all his study of Hindu philosophy."

2. Our divisions, especially those caused by racial and economic differences, have been a tragic factor in our failure. "The missionary must put a divine question mark against every way of life, every position of power, every habit of thought and philosophy of life, every moral standard which maintains a wall of misunderstanding between himself and his national brother, or which gives him a separate position of authority."

3. The closing of China to the missionary has discovered to us a new set of missionary motives. "We are no longer heroes called to pioneer for the conquering movement of our Lord. We are neighbors who are powerless to meet the needs of those around us. And driven by this despair of our own powers, we seek to bear witness to the Lord who is salvation."

"And precisely this can drive us to a new discovery of that Lord and the nature of His salvation. The needs of the world are not such that we can answer them with either of the traditional missionary techniques. If our efforts at enlightenment and social service have proved to be only sweet fruits of a dying order, our attempts to preach the Gospel have not been much more successful, because the Chinese world has not been asking the questions to which our preaching is the answer."

4. Our missionary task as Christians is a total task, to the whole life of the people to whom we are sent. And so we must deal in a realistic way with such matters as social justice and economic stability. "Among intellectuals in the face of Communism our first sermon may well be a discriminating act of repentance; an analysis of imperialism as it really is, the powers which drive it, the nature of the western Christian's involvement in

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it. It may be that the first view which an Asian citizen should see of the operation of God's grace is to observe how it makes the western Christian sensitive to and actively repentant for the sins of his social background - the spiritual pride, the economic inequality, the position of political and economic dominance which form the complex of imperialism. This power to change men and make them run against the social forces which determine them is, in lands which have never known freedom from some form of human tyranny, a new thing in history. The deeds by which we demonstrate that we act in obedience to this new power, the Grace of God which is sovereign over all society and all human life, - these deeds and not our words nor our mission plans, are the decisive power of our mission. These deeds of witness and obedience point men beyond us and beyond our western society, to the God who is our Saviour.

"In China practically every erstwhile Christian school has been lost to the Government. God has taken these instruments away from us, and rightly so. We had become attached to our institutions. They had become ends in themselves. The university to which the author was attached was not an instrument through which God was able to reveal and define His will, the nature of His work among the different areas of Chinese life. It was a bourgeois professional training school with a Christian church attached to it... Such institutions as this God has taken from us because they were human constructions and not witnesses to His saving power. They were not acts of obedience through which men were able to see their Lord, but houses in which men sought security. But the question must be put to educational institutions equally in other lands. How far are they serving the simple purpose of making Christ known in all departments of life? How far do they reflect in their curricula the needs and problems of the real world around them? How far do they train Christians as farmers, as political citizens, as responsible members of their communities, as family members, perhaps as merchants and officials, to bear witness to their redeeming God, in the structure of their social life and against the powers of evil which rule there? How are the powers of history evaluated, and how is God shown at work there? How are the political movements of today analyzed, especially Communism, and how is the Christian encouraged to meet them? How is the student helped to clarify his understanding of social justice, and to wrestle with the problem of his own security over against this justice? With his deeds of obedience to his Lord in these fields, Christian evangelism begins. These deeds which demonstrate and point to the power of God create the situation in which the Word can be spoken."

5. Our true success is not in the successful carrying out of our plans, or in the prosperity of the institutions we establish, but "whether in the time of testing a community bound to one another and to the world by obedience to such a Lord, bears witness to His truth before all the powers of earth, as the voice of their Judge and Redeemer."

NANCY LAPWOOD AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE

Mrs. Ralph Lapwood (LMS) remained in Peking after her husband left in order to attend the Peace Conference. On October 7 she addressed the Conference. Excerpts from her speech as reported by NCNA are given below:

"I am an Australian, born in China, married to an Englishman and mother of four children. My father came to China nearly 50 years ago as a medical missionary. My husband came 20 years ago as an educational missionary. It has been my great joy and privilege to live and work in China for 35 out of my 45 years.

"As a Christian I have committed my life to the Prince of Peace who fought against injustice, hypocrisy, ignorance, fear, disease and evil in every form. Through 2000 years his followers have often lost sight of Jesus and what he stood for, and have become bigoted and selfish. (This is then applied to supporters of Chiang Kai-shek).

"But in spite of all our human ignorance, folly and sin, the spirit of Jesus has not been quenched. Today Christians in every land are deeply disquieted about the state of the world and eager to join in a movement which will ensure peace between nations and give expression to their highest hopes and ideals. Christians can and must be mobilized to fight for peace for the brotherhood of man. (She then goes on at considerable length to condemn germ warfare and the subservience of Australia and England to America. The Western nations have, she says, a real fear of invasion by the USSR and China, but she and her family will do their best in England to dispel this ridiculous fear.)

"The people of England are becoming restless and ill at ease under increasing American domination, and deeply resentful at being made into America's much-vaunted unsinkable aircraft carrier So as a Christian, as a mother, as an Australian by birth, a Chinese by adoption, and an English woman by marriage I passionately desire peace, and am committed to fight for peace at whatever cost.

MISSIONARY NEWS

Recent deaths include Rev. Robert Wood, Episcopal, formerly in Wuchang; Mrs. Ralph C. Wells, Presbyterian USA.

We have some supplementary information to the List of Protestant Missionaries in China in our last issue. The Danish woman mentioned is Miss Sorenson, somewhere in Manchuria. In addition there is another Dane, Mr. Nielson, in Manchuria. The only man by that name whom we find in our lists of missionaries is Dr. N. Nielsen, who went to Siuyen, Liao-ning, under the Danish Missionary Society in 1907. Whether it is the same man we do not know. There is also a Finnish missionary at work in Hunan, and it is reported that he is permitted to go freely about his work.

Rev. Olin Stockwell, Methodist, Chungking, after spending about two years in prison, arrived in Hongkong in good health on Nov. 17, according to a cable received from Bishop Ralph Ward.

Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Hamilton and Miss Margaret Sells, after a year in Japan, have now re-enforced the Southern Presbyterian group in Taiwan. Miss Frances Stribling, of that Mission, is writing Sunday School lesson material for the China Sunday School Union, which now has its headquarters in Taipei.

The China Inland Mission is sending out 14 new recruits, two to Japan, two to Formosa, and the remaining ten to Singapore.

In correction of the statement in the Nov. 17 Bulletin, it is now learned that Arnold Clark (British missionary) was in the party which arrived in Hongkong on October 3.

There are now 42 American Roman Catholic missionaries in China, 5 bishops, 33 priests, 1 lay brother, and 3 sisters. The pre-Communist total was about 500.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gould, formerly with the CIM, are still in Shanghai connected with Butterfield and Swire. It is reported that a monthly prayer-meeting is held in their home.

Miss Helen Willis is still working in the Christian Book Room in Shanghai. Her residence permit has been extended to March 1953, according to a Shanghai letter dated October 27.

Ralph Mortenson preaches every other Sunday in the Trinity Cathedral in Shanghai. Presumably some other English speaking resident of Shanghai, possibly the Mr. Gould mentioned above, preaches on the other Sundays.

CHURCH NEWS

St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church in the former foreign legation quarters in Peking has become the headquarters for the reform movement in the Catholic Church, according to an Associated Press Nov. 4 report. A sign over the gate states "Bureau of the Committee of Reform."

The CLS, the Baptist Bookstore, and the Association Press are cooperating in publishing a calendar sheet, a regular calendar, and a pocket diary for 1953. The calendar uses the picture of "Jesus and the Young Man," evidently Hoffmann's Jesus and the Rich Young Ruler, which has previously been used. The Common Platform is printed in full in the Diary. Prices on the three are 1,000, 3,000, and 5,000 Yuan respectively.

Bishop Y. Y. Tsu is at present returning to the USA after a visit to Hongkong and Formosa.

SCHOOL NEWS

Lingnan University is continuing under the old organization for the current school year, according to a Hongkong newspaper of Sept. 10. This paper states that the previously announced plan to merge with Sun Yat Sen University had been postponed. Another Hongkong newspaper reports on October 18 that 123 members of Lingnan faculty, including Chen Yung-ling, Dean of Engineering, Yang Hsiu-chen, Foreign Languages, and Chin Kuang-yu, College of Medicine, have been sent to a Wuhan concentration camp for "reform through labor". Ten Lingnan students who had received letters from abroad were arrested as suspected spies.